

INTRODUCING THE
NISSAN ROGUE
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HEROES

CHAPTER 89

ROOT AND BRANCH

Part 2 of 3

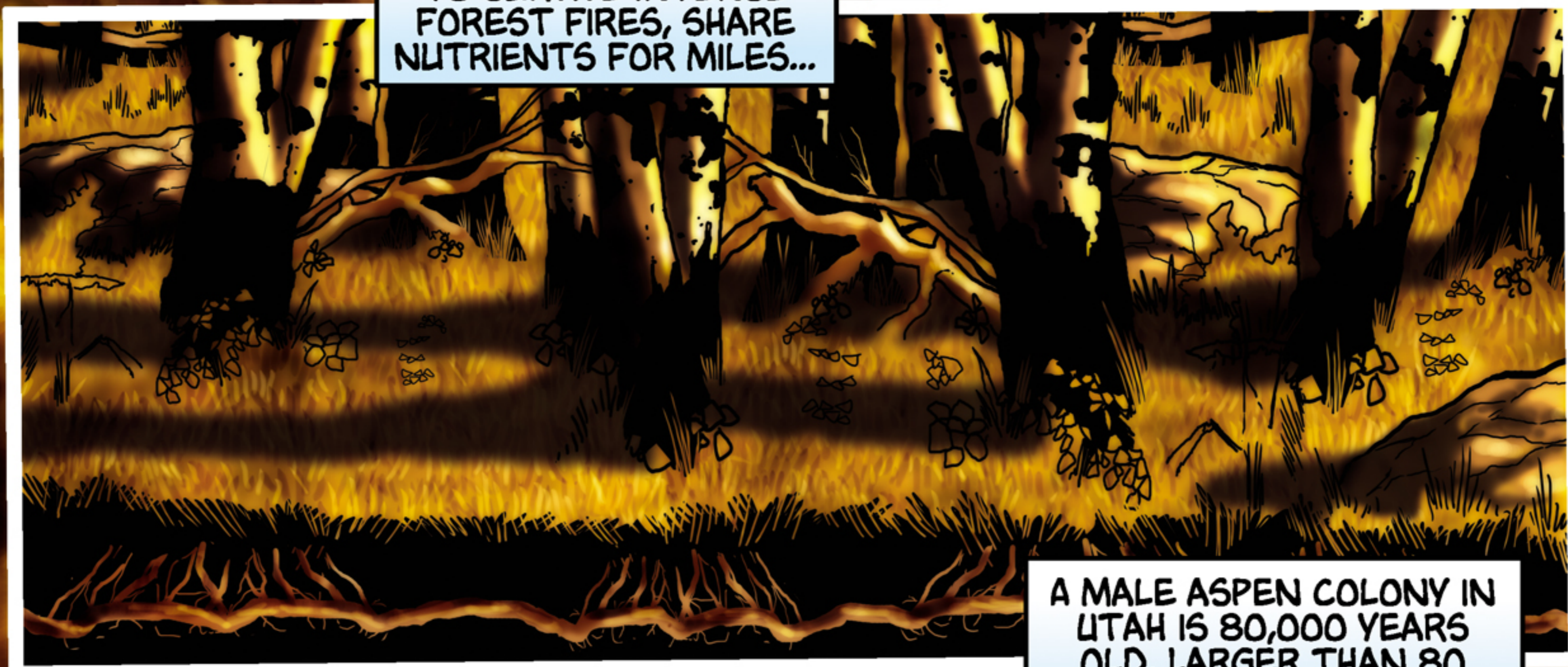
Julien Dumont is a Company agent with a very special ability. He can create exact replicants of himself, an ability which has been a great resource for the Company. Partnered with the stunning and deadly Sabine Hazel, they are a formidable team.

On a recent solo mission, Sabine's rouge clone target was killed. However, lying to both Julien and the Company, she falsely reported him as escaped. What forces are turning agent against agent; partner against partner...

THE *ASPEN TREE*, THE LARGEST KNOWN SINGLE ORGANISM IN THE WORLD.

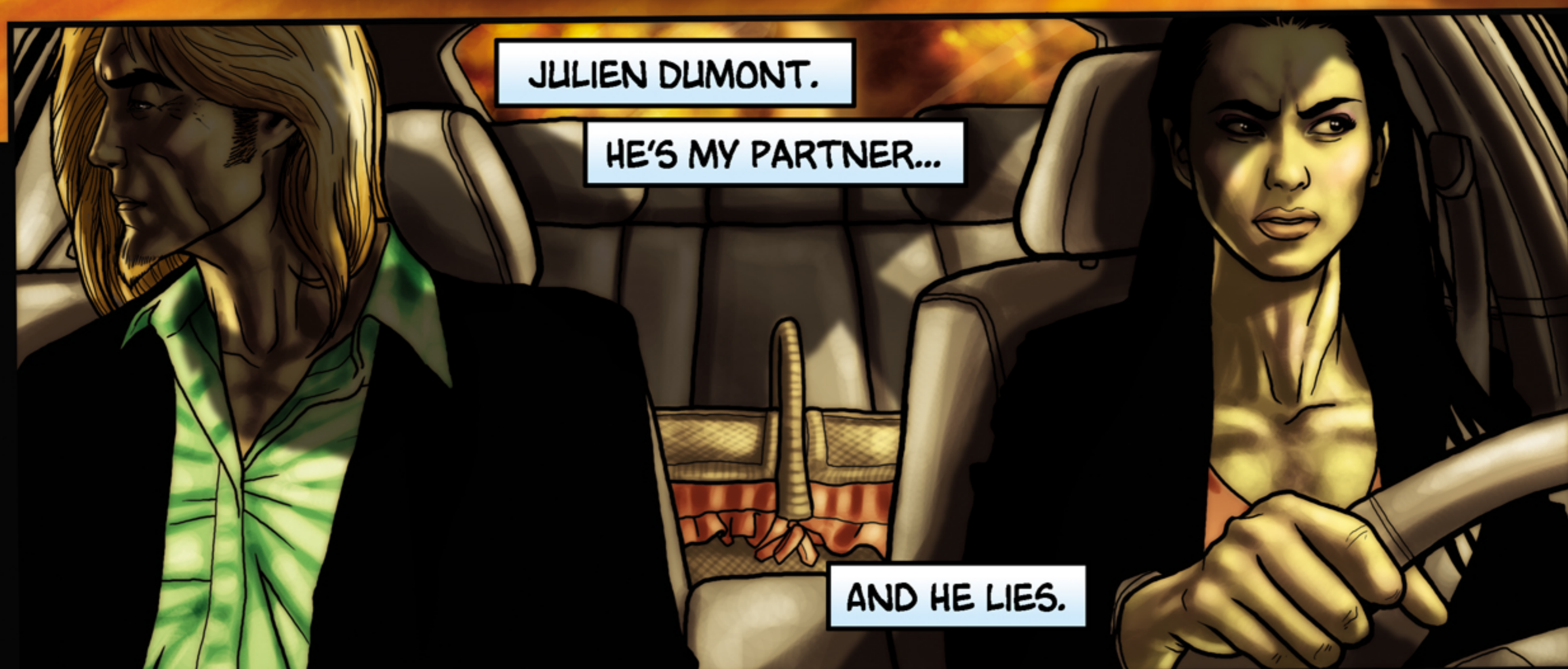
STRANDS OF GENETICALLY IDENTICAL TREES CONNECTED BY A SINGLE ROOT SYSTEM.

THE BURIED ROOTS ABLE TO SURVIVE INTENSE FOREST FIRES, SHARE NUTRIENTS FOR MILES...



A MALE ASPEN COLONY IN UTAH IS 80,000 YEARS OLD. LARGER THAN 80 FOOTBALL FIELDS. 47,000 INDIVIDUAL TREES.

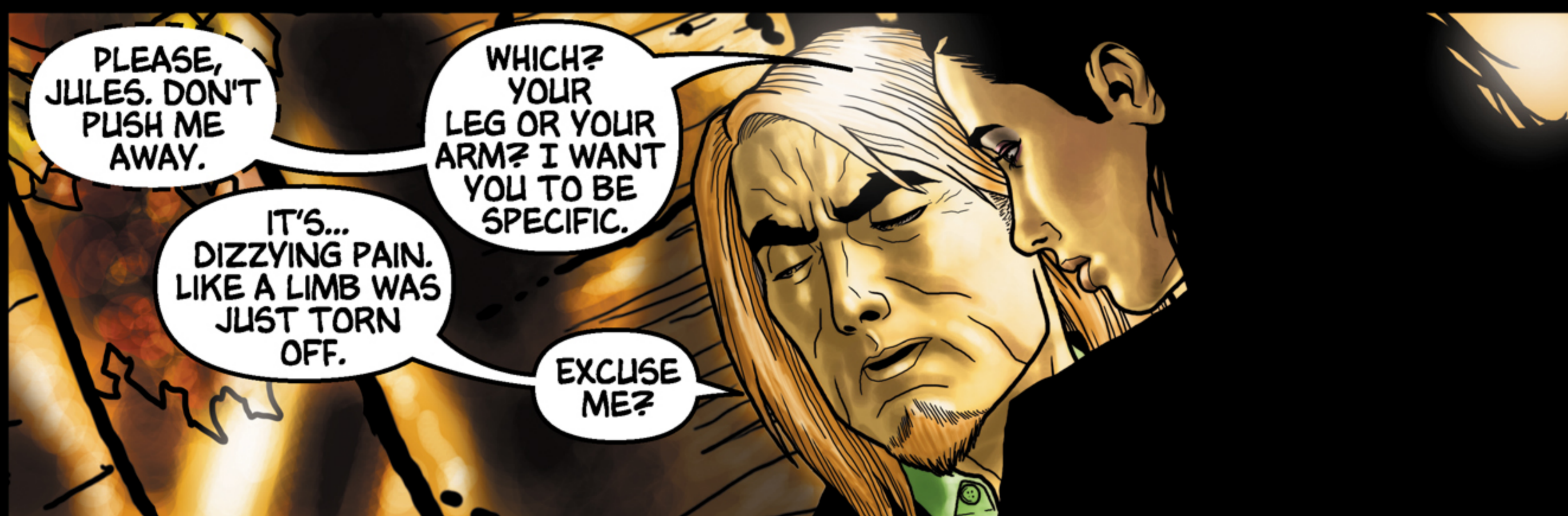
BUT WHAT'S IN THE CAR SEAT NEXT TO ME, IS EVEN MORE ADVANCED THAN THE ASPEN:



JULIEN DUMONT.

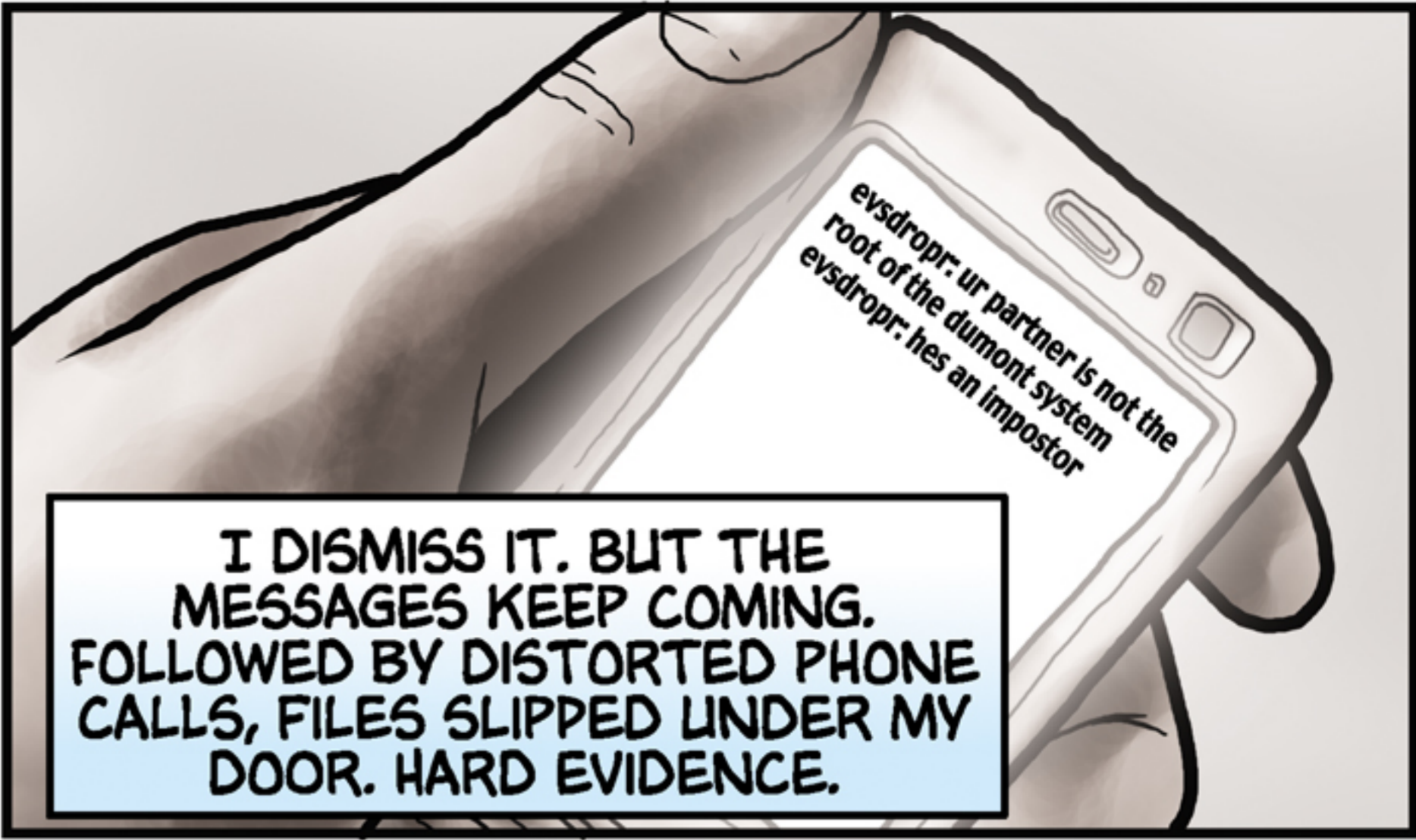
HE'S MY PARTNER...

AND HE LIES.

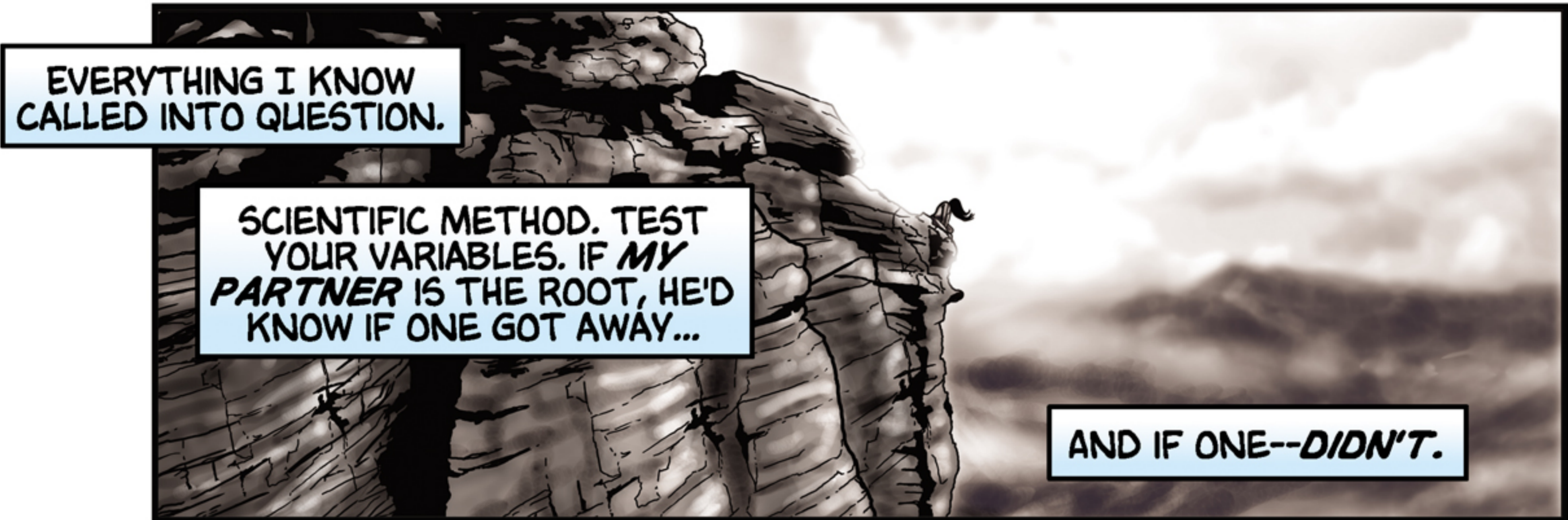




EVS DROPPER...



I DISMISS IT. BUT THE MESSAGES KEEP COMING. FOLLOWED BY DISTORTED PHONE CALLS, FILES SLIPPED UNDER MY DOOR. HARD EVIDENCE.



EVERYTHING I KNOW CALLED INTO QUESTION.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD. TEST YOUR VARIABLES. IF *MY PARTNER* IS THE ROOT, HE'D KNOW IF ONE GOT AWAY...

AND IF ONE--*DIDN'T*.



LIAR.

TO BE FAIR. I NEVER LIED TO YOU, LOVE.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO CALL ME THAT.

THE COMPANY HID HIM AWAY YEARS BEFORE YOU EVER WORKED THERE.

YOU'VE NEVER EVEN MET *HIM*. I'M THE ONLY ONE YOU'VE *KNOWN*.

I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK.



HOW MANY OF *YOU* HAVE I SLEPT WITH?

HOW *MANY*?!

THERE MAY HAVE BEEN... OTHERS...

...NOT MY IDEA...



YOU'RE NOT JULIEN. YOU'RE DISGUSTING.

ARRRGHH!

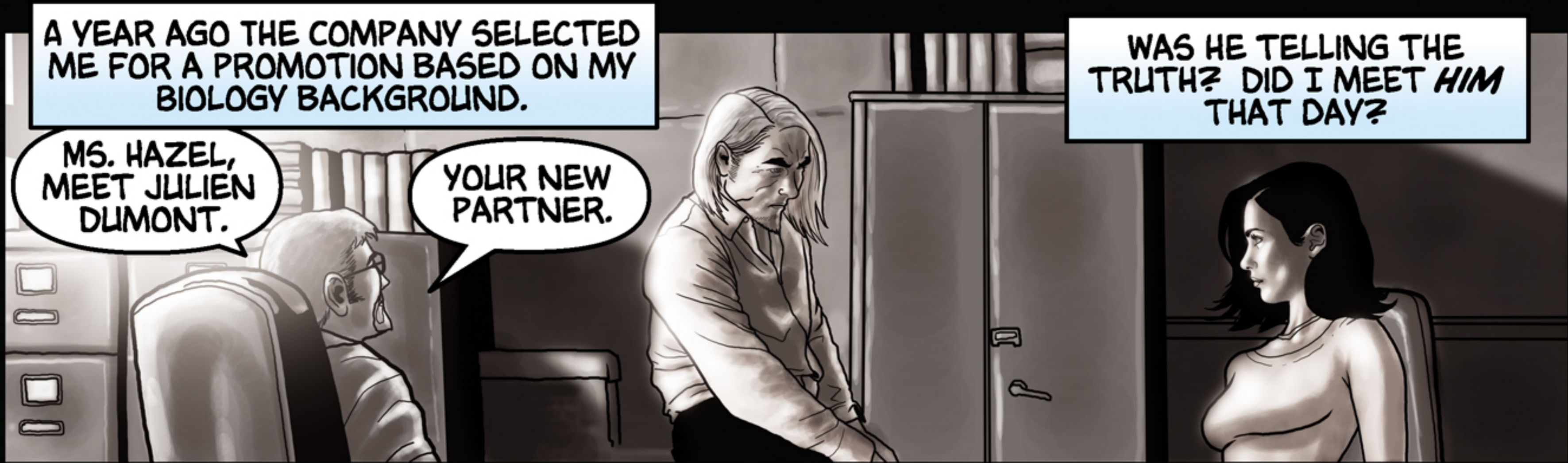
BLAM

SABINE-- I'M THE ONE YOU LOVE!

I DON'T LOVE YOU.

BLAM





A YEAR AGO THE COMPANY SELECTED ME FOR A PROMOTION BASED ON MY BIOLOGY BACKGROUND.

MS. HAZEL, MEET JULIEN DUMONT.

YOUR NEW PARTNER.

WAS HE TELLING THE TRUTH? DID I MEET *HIM* THAT DAY?

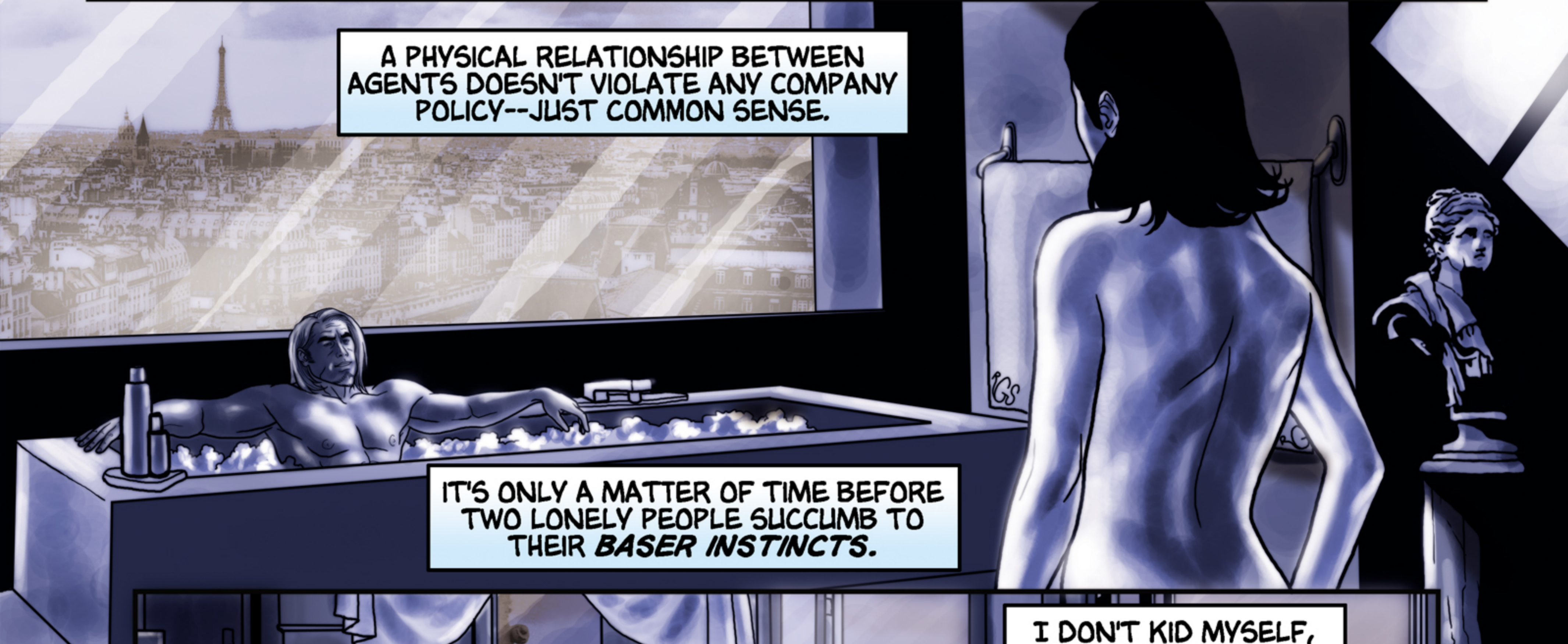


DUMONT HAS A CLONAL POWER, HE CAN VEGETATIVELY REPLICATE HIMSELF. HIS OFFSHOOTS CAN WITHSTAND DAMAGE, EVEN DEATH...

...ANYTHING HAPPENS TO *THIS* DUMONT, THE WHOLE SYSTEM GOES DOWN, WE LOSE EVERY CLONE WE HAVE IN PLAY. WE CLEAR?

WERE THEY ALL SIMPLY PLAYING ME FROM DAY ONE?

CRYSTAL.



A PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGENTS DOESN'T VIOLATE ANY COMPANY POLICY--JUST COMMON SENSE.

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE TWO LONELY PEOPLE SUCCUMB TO THEIR *BASER INSTINCTS*.



I DON'T KID MYSELF, IT'S NOT LOVE. IT'S JUST HUMAN CONTACT. WE BOTH NEEDED IT, ARMS TO BE HELD IN. AND APPARENTLY HE USED SEVERAL.



IF YOU KILL ME, I WILL DIE, YOU'LL NEVER GET ME BACK. HE'S NOT WHO YOU THINK HE IS.

I CAN SHOW YOU. NO MORE LIES.

NO MORE LIES?

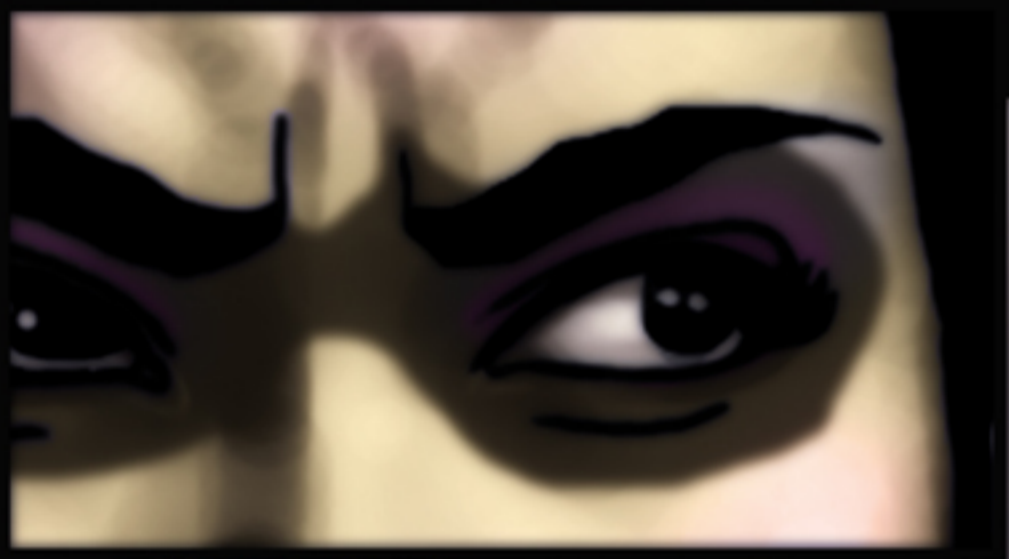
I PROMISE. SABINE, I'M THE *ONE* WHO LOVES YOU.

DO I TRUST *HIM*? IS HE THE *ONE*?



IT'S A LONG DRIVE BACK. TELLING MYSELF I DIDN'T JUST KILL THE MAN I LOV--

THE MAN I'VE SPENT A YEAR CONVINCING MYSELF I DON'T LOVE.



THE CLONES ARE STILL ALIVE. HE WASN'T THE ROOT. AT LEAST YOU GOT THAT MUCH RIGHT.



ROOT AND BRANCH

Part 2 WEEDING OUT

ZACH
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Writer

JASON
BADOWER
Art

COMIC
CRAFT
Lettering

An
ASPEN MLT INC.
Production

